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FBI will probe Roselli murder

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Atty. Gen. Edward H. Levi late Friday ordered the FBI to investigate whether mobster John Roselli was murdered as a result of his Senate committee testimony on CIA assassination plots against Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

Levi responded to requests from Senate intelligence committee members that the Justice Department take charge of the investigation.

Justice Department spokesman Robert Havel said Levi told the FBI "to investigate whether the Roselli homicide was the result of his testimony before the committee or to prevent future testimony before a committee of Congress."

Roselli's body was found stuffed in a drum floating in Biscayne Bay off the Florida coast over the weekend.

Roselli had testified about his role in a CIA scheme to use organized crime figures to kill Castro. The scheme was never carried out.

Havel said Levi authorized the FBI to enter the case under a federal statute which makes it a crime to obstruct proceedings before government agencies and congressional committees.

The statute sets a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a $5,000 fine.

FBI Diretor Clarence M. Kelley said Wednesday that department officials

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had advised him there was no federal jurisdiction in the case. Murder is not usually a federal crime.

But Havel said Levi now has decided there is a basis for entering the case. He reached the decision after "communicating with the people up on the (Capitol) Hill to determine what Roselli had told the committee."

Roselli, 70, at one time was known as the West Coast lieutenant of Chicago mobster Sam Giacana, who also was involved in the CIA assassination plots against Castro. Giancana was murdered in June 1975, shortly before he would have been called to testify before Senate investigators.

The federal investigation, Havel said, "is to be undertaken with close cooperation and coordination with the authorities" in Dade County, Fla., which has jurisdiction over the Biscayne Bay area.

In his instructions to the FBI, Levi emphasized "that Dade County has the principal responsibility for the investigation," the spokesman said.

Roselli, who had told Senate investigators of his role in CIA plots to kill Cuba's Fidel Castro, disappeared on July 28 on his way to a golf game in Plantation, Fla. His body was found last weekend in a chainwrapped oil drum floating in Miami's Biscayne Bay.